

Shoptalk Survey 1995

Summary Report

Washington State Department of Ecology Hazardous Waste and Toxics Reduction Program December, 1995 Publication #95-427

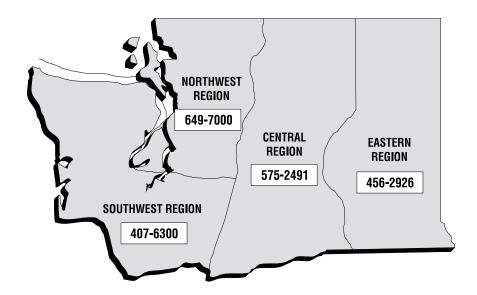


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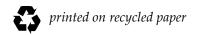
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Executive Summary

Background

The Washington State Department of Ecology has mailed the *Shoptalk* newsletter to hazardous waste generators since early 1991. The newsletter is an important tool for helping business people learn about hazardous waste regulatory compliance and pollution prevention issues. By 1995, the mailing list had grown to over 28,000 and Ecology staff responsible for producing the newsletter decided it was time to evaluate its effectiveness.

In the spring of 1995, a telephone survey was conducted of a randomly selected sample of those people who had received at least seven issues of *Shoptalk*. Prior to the telephone contact, program staff sent those chosen for the sample, letters explaining the survey and an extra copy of *Shoptalk*. Specially trained Senior Environmental Corps Volunteers and Ecology staff conducted the survey.

Survey Results

Survey participants reported that they felt Ecology provides useful services in a courteous way. Here are some of the survey results:

Shoptalk Newsletter

Shoptalk readers who participated in the survey all said the newsletter is easy to understand. Most of the people surveyed said that Shoptalk prints the information they want and need. Respondents particularly utilized the sections covering meeting announcements, waste reduction and recycling topics and annual reporting requirements. There were many suggestions for future article topics. Several respondents requested an industry-specific automotive issue, so we are considering writing one.

Staff and Services

Ninety-six percent of respondents who had been visited by Ecology staff said the visits were useful or very useful. Those who had attended workshops gave them high marks, with 93% describing them as useful. When respondents called Ecology for help, they said they got it! Ninety-five percent of respondents said telephone help was useful. Guidance manuals and publications also got high marks, with 83% ranking them as helpful.

Many respondents remembered Ecology staff who had offered exceptional help. Staff were described as being "very helpful", "polite", "friendly", having an "improved attitude", and offering "consistently excellent assistance" and "brilliant pollution prevention ideas".

Follow-up

The results from the survey were circulated to all staff. This information will be used to increase the services respondents found useful, and to evaluate suggestions made by the survey participants. Many changes have already been made in response to the comments we received.

Methodology

Background

Shoptalk is a quarterly publication sent to over 28,000 addresses. The goal of the publication is to reach hazardous waste generators and provide them with information about hazardous waste management and pollution prevention. This survey was designed to find out whether Shoptalk meets the needs of the business community. Ecology wanted to know whether the right people receive the newsletter and if the information they get from Shoptalk is useful.

Ecology staff chose to survey by telephone a random sample of individuals who receive *Shoptalk*. This method reached a broad range of readers while minimizing the inconvenience to respondents. Telephone calls were designed to be limited to five minutes. Once respondents identified themselves as *Shoptalk* readers, they were asked questions about the newsletter and other goods and services provided by Ecology staff.

A previous *Shoptalk* survey was taken in 1992. This survey was a one page series of questions designed to be torn out of the *Shoptalk* newsletter and mailed back to Ecology. The response rate for this survey was 1.1%. Those respondents saying they used the information from *Shoptalk* represented 0.9% of those listed on the *Shoptalk* mailing list. This low response rate may have been due to the survey design that required respondents to fill-in, tear-out, stamp, and mail the survey without receiving a tangible benefit for their troubles. Those who completed the survey represented a self-selected group with enough time and interest to return the questionnaires.

Sample Selection

To avoid the type of self-selection encountered in 1992, a random sample was taken from the *Shoptalk* mailing list. Each address on the mailing list was assigned a number in numerical order. Then a random number generator produced 450 numbers within this range. The addresses with a number corresponding to those identified by the random number generator were selected and copied onto a new list.

These 450 names represented the original sample. This sample was further reduced to remove out of state addresses. This list was compared to the 1993 mailing list to remove those who had not received at least seven copies of *Shoptalk*. The sample was then screened using Department of Revenue data to eliminate any closed businesses. These steps reduced the survey list to 288.

The next step was to find telephone numbers for the sample group. The Department of Revenue data included telephone

numbers for open businesses. The remainder of the telephone numbers were located through telephone books and directory assistance.

After the sample was selected and telephone numbers found, letters about the survey with an extra copy of *Shoptalk* were sent to the sample. Calls were staggered over a three week period to ensure that respondents would be called shortly after receipt of the letters. The letters were sent in two separate batches. Two-thirds of the sample were sent letters right away, and the rest were mailed letters two weeks later.

Survey Design

The survey was designed to learn how useful respondents find the *Shoptalk* newsletter and other Ecology goods and services, and how well staff meet the respondents needs. Regional staff and a representative from the Independent Business Association helped in prepare the survey design and questions.

The survey was designed to be easy to understand and take less then five minutes to complete. Interviewers used names and telephone numbers to reach sample representatives by phone. Each sample representative was assigned a code number. To ensure that responses were anonymous the results were analyzed using code numbers for each respondent. This code number was used on the answer sheet to protect the identity of respondents. Interviewers were supplied with specially designed answer sheets to use during interviews.

The interviewer making a call first established that the correct person was reached. If no one at the telephone number dialed had knowledge about *Shoptalk*, or if they asked to be removed from the mailing list, no further questions were asked. Only respondents who had participated in a type of service, for example, who had attended a workshop, were asked further questions about the service. Respondents were asked a combination of multiple choice and open ended questions. A copy of the questionnaire appears in Appendix 1.

Survey Takers

Industry representatives suggested the most convenient times for reaching representatives from their industry. Surveyors adhered to this schedule as much as possible.

Senior Environmental Corps volunteers were recruited to make the bulk of the calls. Since volunteers are not paid staff, this ensured that no prior work related interactions had occurred between the volunteer and respondents. The use of volunteers was also intended to encourage frank responses.

The volunteers were trained in telephone interviewing techniques. They discussed a list of possible scenarios where com-

plications might arise during the interview process. Once the volunteers felt comfortable with the solutions to these potentially difficult calls, they participated in a simulated interview to hone their technique and practice using their answer sheets. Volunteers were provided with back issues of *Shoptalk* and a list of telephone numbers to help in referring respondents who asked for help.

Special recognition is made to Senior Environmental Corps volunteers Harry Johnson, Victor Hill and Raymond Price who helped conduct the survey. Ecology also appreciates the cooperation of all those who agreed to be interviewed.

Mailing List Sources

The *Shoptalk* mailing list is derived from a combination of several lists. The majority of *Shoptalk* copies (59%) are sent to businesses represented by selected Standard Industrial Codes (SIC). The Standard Industrial Codes can be divided into three categories, 57% automotive industry, 22% cleaning industry, and 21% printing industry.

All Toxics Inventory Emergency Response and Resource Conservation and Recovery Information System reporters re-

ceive copies of *Shoptalk*. These reporters are required to provide information under the "Community Right to Know Act," or have federal Environmental Protection Agency assigned hazardous waste identification numbers. The final group, or 12% of readers, asked to be added to the mailing list. Figure 1 shows how the *Shoptalk* mailing list is divided by source.

The regional distribution of *Shoptalk* is almost identical to Ecology's estimated distribution of hazardous waste generating facilities. Ninety-three percent of the mailing list addresses are within Washington State. Of this number, 51% are in the northwest region, 29% are in the southwest region, 12% are in the eastern region and 8% are in the central region. Figure 2 shows the *Shoptalk* mailing regional division derived from zip codes.

Response Rate

Thirty percent of the sample who responded to our calls admitted they read *Shoptalk*, and agreed to participate in the survey. Forty-one percent of the selected sample could not be reached after two or three attempts. This group may have included people who work outside an office, those who chose not to participate and therefore did not return calls, those who did not have time to return calls, and anyone who was not available at the times when we attempted to reach them.

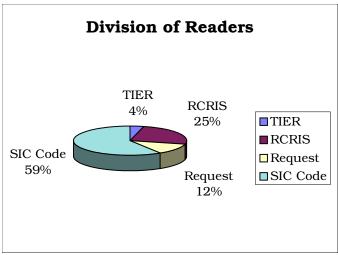


Figure 1

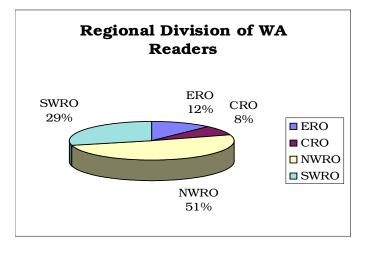


Figure 2

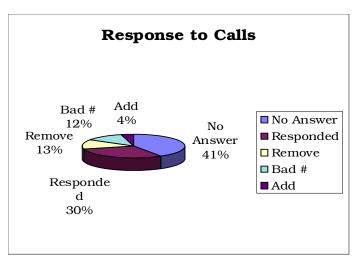


Figure 3

Twelve percent of attempted calls turned out to be incorrect

numbers. The incorrect numbers may have been from an inaccurate Department of Revenue or telephone directory source, or due to business closure or relocation.

Four percent of respondents asked to be added to the *Shoptalk* mailing list. These individuals were not routed the copy of *Shoptalk* that arrives at their place of work. Our records show that each sample representative had been sent at least seven copies of *Shoptalk*, plus the informational letter about the survey. Where individuals asked to be added to the mailing list, their name was included to the address already on the mailing list to ensure that this individual would begin receiving the publication.

Thirteen percent of the sample asked to be taken off the *Shoptalk* mailing list. Among these respon-

dents were a number of small, at-home businesses, especially sewing shops. Also in this group were people who did not read English, individuals who had changed jobs and persons who said they do not read any of their mail. These people were all promptly removed from the mailing list.

Figure 3 shows how the original sample was reduced by the above circumstances to the final sample from which results were obtained.

Results

Newsletter

Shoptalk is easy or very easy to read and understand according to respondents. Only one respondent found Shoptalk difficult to understand. This individual requested translation into Korean for ease of understanding. One-third of readers surveyed reported they read Shoptalk cover to cover, one-third read only some articles, and one-third scanned the publica-

tion.

When asked about the usefulness of the topic sections in *Shoptalk*, respondents rated every topic as more useful then not useful. The favorite sections were: meeting announcements, waste reduction and recycling topics, annual reporting information, and answers to common questions. Figure 4 shows how respondents rated these sections according to their usefulness. The three sections with the lowest levels of perceived usefulness were the case studies, Bookshelf and the awards/loan/grant information sections. Figure 5 shows how respondents rated these parts of the newsletter according to their usefulness

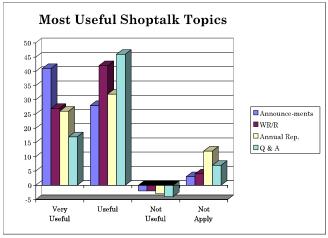


Figure 4

Respondents were asked to remember any *Shoptalk* list:

Air Conditioning "stuff" and freon

Tanks

Rules and form changes

Auto Maintenance

Bodyshop

Control of Painting Waste, recycling of sand blast

Fluorescent bulbs and ballast's

Good practical real-life information that's useful

Inventory reports due

Loan information

Awards and efficiencies

Paper recycling

Regulation status

Case study of Setina Manufacturing

Good Pollution Prevention

Shop Rags

Small Automotive Information

Small Quantity Generators

TRI Levels Down

Waste oil and parts cleaning

Where to take antifreeze

Recycling

Gas stations

Small Quantity Generators disposal opportunities

Good case studies

Printing

Automotive

Freon

"Almost all articles"

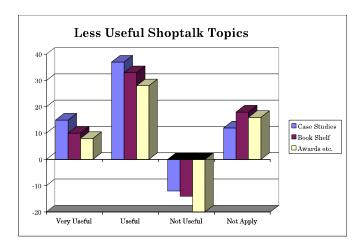


Figure 5

Future article topic suggestions were requested and many respondents had ideas

about what they would like to read, these included:

The ten most difficult regulations Inspection results Safety Issues Air regulations Anything Automotive Brown fields- use of property that has been contaminated "Continue upbeat cooperative effort" Industry specific hints and guidance Information on planned new regulations Landfill products How to recycle Minimum regulations and fees More compliance- less "pat on the back" More on small quality generators More Sites Paint industry information Paint wastes Parts cleaning methods Recycling oil Refrigeration R2 & 134's Body shops Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS's) Antifreeze

Waste oil Haulers Status of law and regulations Stormwater drains Transportation regulations Updating regulations Waste water disposal Water issues such as lakes and streams Ways to recycle Cheap ways to prevent pollution for the "small guy" What Ecology will do with oil filters Ways for small businesses to economically manage wastes Information on recycling centers Expand format beyond small quantity generator mechanical and autobody shops-global coverage of wastes How people are dealing with the tighter regulations Where to take small amounts of hazardous waste Air permits, replacement solvents for banned TRICLOR 111 "Leave it alone" Moderate risk waste facility operation problems and suggestions

Other Ecology Services

The next series of questions focused on the usefulness of Ecology services and interactions with staff. Respondents had experience in many of these areas. Fiftynine respondents had attended a workshop, fifty-seven had used an Ecology publication, forty-four had worked directly with an Ecology staff person, and forty-one had received telephone help from an Ecology staff person. In Figure 6 the overall usefulness of these services is shown as rated by respondents.

Workshops

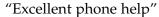
Overall 93% of those attending workshop found them to be useful or very useful. Figure 7 shows the responses according to the type of workshop attended. For hazardous waste generator workshops, 55% found them very useful and 45% found them useful. Pollution prevention planning workshops were ranked as very useful by two thirds of respondents, useful by one-fifth of respondents and not useful by about one-tenth of respondents.

Pollution Prevention Networks and Waste Expos were each ranked as useful or very useful by all but one respondent. The detractor explained that he found some of the content repetitive after attendance for a number of years. Respondents' ratings of workshops are given in Figure 7.

Staff Phone Help

Respondents who called Ecology for help say they got it! Regional hazardous waste compliance staff provided very useful assistance to two thirds of callers and useful assistance to the other third of callers. Regional toxics reduction staff gave useful or very useful assistance to all but one caller responding. Annual reporting staff gave useful help to all but one caller, although several callers indicated that the reporting process was confusing and they found it necessary to call more than once for clarification. Survey responses about the usefulness of staff help appear on Figure 8 on page 12.

Several respondents wanted to make comments about the telephone help they had received from Ecology staff; these included:



[&]quot;Brilliant pollution prevention ideas from Rob Reuter"

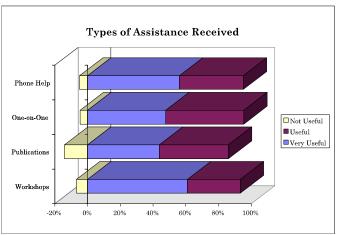


Figure 6

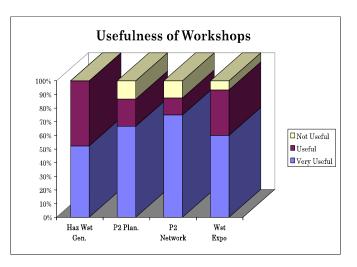


Figure 7

[&]quot;The P2 suggestions have helped my business"

[&]quot;Bob Goldberg is a great help"

[&]quot;Holly Sullivan is helpful and polite"

[&]quot;I get excellent help from Jim Pearson, Brian Dick, Dick Granberg, Greg Schuler and Polly Zehm."

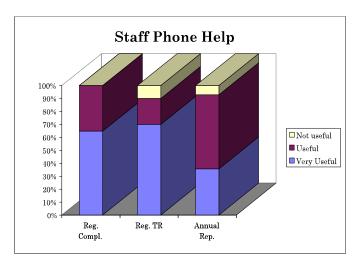


Figure 8

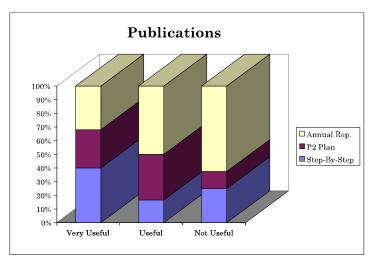


Figure 9

Publications

The publications used by respondents included Step-by-Step Fact Sheets for Hazardous Waste Generators, Pollution Prevention Planning Guidance, and Annual Reporting Guidance. The "Step-by- Step" Fact sheets were useful or very useful to fourteen respondents, while two said without further comment that they were not useful. The Pollution Prevention Planning guidance was useful to 15 out of 16 respondents. Respondents had more to say about the Annual Reporting Guidance, which 80% of respondents found salutary. Twenty percent of respondents said this publication was not useful, instead they indicated that they found it confusing. Ecology revised the annual reporting requirements and guidance document for 1995, which should address the

problems reported by the survey respondents. Figure 9 shows how respondents rated individual Ecology publications.

Visits by Ecology Staff

Survey respondents made it clear that Ecology staff are helpful and professional when they come to call. Over seventy percent of pollution prevention planning visits were ranked as very useful, with the remainder ranked "useful." Hazardous waste inspection visits were also useful or very useful to respondents. One respondent said this visit was not useful, but

explained it was because he had difficulty making the changes requested by the inspectors since his supervisors did not support them. Several respondents explained that they understood the inspectors were "just doing their jobs" and felt no animosity towards them when they pointed out violations. Respondents mentioned that Ecology staff seemed to have adopted an improved attitude and praised their willingness to work cooperatively towards their goals.

Almost all "Snap Shots" and "Shop Sweeps" visits were characterized by respondents as useful or very useful. The staff visits ratings by respondents appear in Figure 10.

When discussing "Shop Sweeps" visits with automotive industry representatives, we discovered that several respondents shared preconceived notions about Ecology staff. The respondents explained that

the staff who visited, "Didn't know anything," but later went on to add that, "those Ecology people did know about waste, antifreeze and solvents and stuff."

What the respondents indicated was that the Ecology staff "only" knew about their own waste related "stuff." They believed some staff did not know about the specifics of the auto-

motive industry. Information about their industry, in the opinion of the respondents, was the only important thing people need to know.

Many respondents were generous with their praise for the Ecology staff with whom they had worked. Eighteen individuals were remembered by name, and many others were complemented in a general way. Some of the comments are listed below:

Praise

Generally helpful staff Helpful staff (3) Friendly staff Informative team effort

Staff are kind Serves me "fine"

Shoptalk is very useful to my small business Staff are okay, have no problems

Very helpful (2)

very neipful (2)

Polly Zehm CRO

"A lot easier to get along with then EPA"

"Love the work you guys do"

"Good People" (4) "very good" (3) "okay" (3)

Be sure to keep sending *Shoptalk*

"Most staff want to work together, have changed from former confrontational attitude"

Criticism

"Called DOE years ago and they were not helpful"

"Problem with policy staff turnover"

"Delay in responses due to voice mail"

The following staff were singled out for accolades:

Brian Dick CRO Margit Bantowsky SWRO Kevin Fitzpatrick NWRO **Bob Goldberg SWRO** Dick Granberg CRO Patricia Jatczak SWRO Dennis Johnson NWRO Michael Johnson SWRO Alice North NWRO Hugh O'neil SWRO Iim Oberlander SWRO Jim Pearson CRO Rob Reuter NWRO Greg Schuler CRO Holly Sullivan HQ Dee Williams SWRO

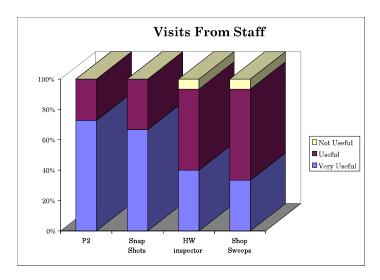


Figure 10

Source of Hazardous Waste Management Information

Ecology uses many tools and techniques to provide regulated businesses with information about hazardous waste management and pollution prevention. Survey respondents were asked an open ended question to find out what were their sources of hazardous waste management information. These results can be used to improve Ecology's information distribution.

All of the respondents had already acknowledged reading *Shoptalk* for information. Twenty-two respondents indicated that they went to the Department of Ecology for their information. Six respondents specified that *Shoptalk* exclusively provided them with this information. Eleven asked their vendors for information and seven turned to the company supplying them with a solvent cleaning service. Local government served as the information source for six respondents. Five respondents said they got their information from their professional associations, and five turned to the federal Environmental Protection Agency. Others indicated they turned to the fire department, the coast guard, the Department of Transportation, trade schools, transporters, the newspapers or their lawyer.

Whenever Ecology conducts a public poll, staff are very interested to learn from the results. Results from the *Shoptalk* survey were presented to Hazardous Waste and Toxic Reductions staff, and interested staff from other programs. *Shoptalk* Survey Results Presentations were given once at each of the four regional offices and twice at headquarters. Animated discussions followed each presentation. Staff offered numerous suggestions about how to use the information collected. They also discussed how to improve the *Shoptalk* mailing list, made content suggestions and volunteered information specific to their region. Many of these recommendations and interpretations were used to update *Shoptalk* and in the preparation of this report, many will be used in the future.

The *Shoptalk* newsletter charter was adjusted to take into account the content preferences expressed by respondents. The mailing list is being revised through several innovative means to eliminate mailings to non-targeted audiences. Several suggested articles have been assigned. The suggestion for a special "automotive" *Shoptalk* publication was considered and is

Follow Up

in the planning stage.

Information from those business operators visited during Shop Sweeps and Snap Shots campaigns will be passed to lead staff on new projects. This information could be useful for any Ecology staff person embarking on a single industry campaign. Staff visiting an industry for which he or she has little or no working knowledge cannot quickly learn all there is to know about the industry. It may help to explain what he or she does not know — thereby showing respect for the person visited who does know about the technology or process. After acknowledging their limitations in one area, the staff person could explain the reason for the visit and the type of information he or she can share with the industry.

Summary of Changes Made

Shoptalk

- 1. Changing the name of the *Shoptalk* "Bookshelf" section to "Free Info" This will help readers understand that the Ecology publications are not books and they are free.
- 2. Reducing the size of the case study article to reflect the number of readers in the industry covered in the article. The Summer 1995 case study about a dry cleaning business is about one-third of a column, instead of the whole column previously used. Dry cleaners make up one-third of all *Shoptalk* readers.

If the Case Study is about the auto industry next time, for example, the article will return to the full column size.

- 4. Reporting the results of the survey in the Summer 1995 issue of *Shoptalk*.
- 5. Including an article about the popularity of workshops, as indicated by respondents and participants.
- 6. Continuing to use clear, simple language and keeping articles as short as possible.
- 7. Working to assign article topics suggested for inclusion in future *Shoptalk* issues.
- 8. Updating and reusing articles cited by respondents as popular or useful.
- 9. Considering the option of developing a special automotive issue.

Mailing List

- Removing from mailing list all who requested removal, also removed all sewing and simple upholstery businesses, out of town bankers or accountants, and duplicates where possible.
- 2. Intending to use a new strategy of next mailing list update. The list will only include businesses with enough income to require at least quarterly tax reporting. The new strategy will eliminate dry-cleaning businesses they will be picked up through another outreach strategy.
- 3. Requesting mailing lists from regional Moderate Risk Waste coordinators. These lists are often more accurate then Department of Revenue generated lists since they include contact people.
- 4. Implementing a new method for identifying businesses that pay the \$35 education fee may simplify the mailing list design process. The fee payer list is frequently updated and those who do not generate hazardous waste are likely to request their names be removed from this list.
- Adding, the names of respondents to the mailing list as requested to ensure they receive the copy sent to their address.

Appendix A: Shoptalk Survey

please	the best way to assist businesses in meeting	g their h	onmental Corp. volunteer. We are doing a survey eazardous waste management needs. Can you . If you prefer, I can call back later. (If yes, ask
	r answers are confidential. We sent you a lett u get it? (If they act unsure: <i>Shoptalk</i> is a fre		week with an extra copy of Ecology's Shoptalk. cation and I'm not selling anything.)
(0)	Are you a hazardous waste generator? YES	NO -	
(1)	Do you usually receive <i>Shoptalk</i> ? YES	NO - good b	I'm sorry to bother you, thank you, bye.
(2)	Do you read it? YES	(3)	NO -ls there someone else there who reads Shoptalk?
(5)		May I s (4)	peak to that person? (return to 1) NO-Before we hang up, please indicate why you do not read <i>Shoptalk</i> : (N) no time (A) Articles are not of interest (F) Format is poor (O) Other Thank you for your time, good bye.
(6)	How easy is it to understand the information (V) Very easy to understand (E) Easy to understand (D) Difficult to understand	n presei	nted in <i>Shoptalk</i> ?
very us (7) (8) (9) (10) (11) (12) (13)	Seful (V), useful (U), not useful (L), or not ap Waste reduction and recycling techniques a Case studies of generators Questions and answers section Bookshelf Announcements and descriptions of new re Annual reporting requirements Awards/ grants/loans program information	plicable and idea egulatio	is .
(15)	Do you have any ideas for useful topics to o	cover in	future articles?

Department of Ecology staff offer many kinds of technical assistance services and educational events and materials. I'm going to name four of these. To help find out which are most useful, please tell me whether you have first hand experience with any of them. Then, please indicate whether it was very useful (V), useful (U) or not useful (N).

(only mark where the respondent confirms first hand experience)

(16)	Have you ever attended an Ecology workshop? (YES / NO)	
	(17) Hazardous Waste Generator Workshop (V-U-L)	
	(18) Pollution Prevention Planning Workshop (V-U-L)	
	(19) Pollution prevention network meeting (V-U-L)	
	(20) A Waste Expo (V-U-L)	
(21)	Have you ever received help through a phone call with Ecology staff? (YES / NO)	
	If yes, do you know who you spoke with?	
	(22) Regional hazardous waste compliance staff (V-U-L)	
	(23) Regional toxics reduction staff (V-U-L)	
	(24) Annual reporting staff (V-U-L)	
	(25) Other (V-U-L)	
(26)	Have you ever used an Ecology publication? (YES / NO)	
	Was it?	
	(27) Step-by-Step: Fact sheets for hazardous waste generators (V-U-L)	
	(28) Pollution Prevention Planning guidance manual (V-U-L)	
	(29) Annual Report Forms Guidance Manual (V-U-L)	
	(30) Others (please list)	
(31)	Have you ever been visited by Ecology staff? (YES / NO)	
	Do you know if it was?	
	(32) On-site visit by a hazardous waste inspector (V-U-L)	
	(33) On-site visit for pollution prevention assistance (V-U-L)	
	(34) "Snap Shots" visits for phot processing industry (V-U-L)	
	(35) "Shop Sweeps" visits for automotive industry (V-U-L)	
	(36) Other (V-U-L)	
(37)	Do you have any other comments to make about how Hazardous Waste and Toxics Reduction St	afí
have s	rved you?	
(20)		
(38)	Where do you usually go to get you hazardous waste management information?	
	If you did not get the correct person on your first try: I understand you are not receiving <i>Shoptalk</i>	_
	? Would you like to give me you name so I can put it on our mailing list?	
	Name	
Tha	k you very much, your assistance has been very valuable. The results of this survey will appear	in
	nmer issue of <i>Shoptalk</i> .	

If they ask for assistance or information:

If you need information about hazardous waste management, please refer to the *Shoptalk* Bookshelf section on page 3. You can call 1-800-633-7585 to order publications. Regional offices are listed on page 6 and staff there would welcome your calls.